

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EB-07 COME-00 TRSE-00 CIEP-01 FRB-03

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C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 2127

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: JA, US

SUBJ: MEDIA COVERAGE SUMMARY LOCKHEED - FEB 11 AND 12

REF: TOKYO 2045

1. WHILE NO SINGLE STORY DOMINATED LOCKHEED COVERAGE OF FEB 11 AND 12, FOUR STORIES RECEIVED SUBSTANTIAL MEDIA PLAY.

2. "KUBO RESIGNATION": RUMORS PRINTED EVENING FEB 10 TO THE EFFECT KUBO WOULD EITHER BE FIRED OR FORCED TO RESIGN BECAUSE OF IMPROPER STATEMENTS CONCERNING PXL-LOCKHEED DECISION WERE FOLLOWED ON FEB 11 BY CONFLICTING PRESS REPORTS ON HIS FUTURE. AM YOMIURI SHIMBUN PAGE 1 QUOTES "GOVERNMENT AND LDP LEADERS" AS SAYING IT WOULD BE USUAL IN THIS CASE FOR KUBO TO SUBMIT LETTER OF RESIGNATION WITHIN A FEW DAYS. FEB 11 AM SANKEI SHIMBUN PAGE 2 STORY REPORTS JDA SAKATA VISITING CHIEF CABINET SECRETARY IDE'S OFFICE TO APOLOGIZE FOR KUBO'S "PROBLEMATIC" STATEMENTS. IDE REPORTEDLY ASKED SAKATA TO CAUTION KUBO TO BE CAREFUL IN FUTURE ABOUT SUCH WORDS AND ACTIONS. COMMENT: AT A SEMI-SOCIAL GATHERING WITH EMBOFFS FEB 10, KUBO SHOWED SIGNS OF BEING UNDER PRESSURE. ALTHOUGH HE AVOIDED DIRECT DISCUSSION OF HIS PREDICAMENT HE CONVEYED IMPRESSION THAT HE WOULD BE ABLE TO RIDE OUT THE STORM. WE ARE NOT SO SURE.

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3. "NARITA": TOKYO PRESS AND BROADCASTS OF FEB 11 GAVE MODERATE

COVERAGE TO STATEMENT BY JSP CHAIRMAN NARITA THAT IF LOCKHEED SCANDAL WERE THOROUGHLY EXPOSED MIKI CABINET WOULD HAVE TO RESIGN. NARITA ANNOUNCED READINESS OF JSP, AS MAIN OPPOSITION PARTY, TO FORM CARETAKER CABINET PRIOR GENERAL ELECTIONS. COMMENT: NARITA MAKES SUCH STATEMENTS EVERY TIME THE LDP ENCOUNTERS A CRISIS AND WE DO NOT FORESEE THIS ONE BEING REALIZED.

4. "OSANO INTERVIEW": BOTH NHK NEWS OF FEB 11 AND SANKEI SHIMBUN RAN INTERVIEWS WITH KENJI OSANO, TYCOON ASSOCIATE OF FORMER PM TANAKA, WHO WILL RETURN SOON FROM HAWAII TO TESTIFY BEFORE DIET ON LOCKHEED PAYMENTS. IN BOTH INTERVIEWS OSANO SAID HE WOULD TELL DIET HE HAD NO CONNECTION WITH LOCKHEED PAYMENTS AND RETRACTED PREVIOUS STATEMENT OF NEVER HAVING MET LOCKHEED VP KOTCHIAN. SANKEI'S PAGE 1 INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT QUOTES OSANO AS SAYING CHURCH SUBCOMMITTEE'S LINKING HIM TO LOCKHEED PAYMENTS AS "OUTRAGEOUS" AND "LIES". COMMENT: OSANO WILL BE ONE OF FIRST TWO WITNESSES TO APPEAR IN AND HE WILL PROBABLY TRY TO CONTINUE THIS STONEWALLING APPROACH IN HIS TESTIMONY.

5. "CHURCH SUBCOMMITTEE": FEB 12 YOMIURI, ASAHI AND MAINICHI FRONT-PAGED POSSIBILITY OF CHURCH SUBCOMMITTEE'S RELEASE OF NAMES OF JAPANESE OFFICIALS. ASAHI'S HEADLINE QUOTED SEN CHURCH WITH "I DO NOT KNOW NAMES OF HIGH-RANKING OFFICIALS WHO RECEIVED BRIBES, BUT THEY EXIST;" MAINICHI'S SAID "WALL ON PART OF U.S. THICK FOR IDENTIFICATION OF HIGH-RANKING OFFICIALS." YOMIURI ARTICLE WAS LENGTHY FEB 10 INTERVIEW WITH SUB-COMMITTEE CHIEF COUNSEL LEVINSON WHO IS REPORTED AS SAYING THAT SOME AS YET UNRELEASED LOCKHEED RECEIPTS HAD BEEN GIVEN TO VISITING LDP'S SATO AND THAT THOSE NAMES MIGHT BE RELEASED ON FEB 12. ALL JAPANESE PRESS SEEM EAGER FOR SUBCOMMITTEE'S RELEASE OF NAMES OF GOJ OFFICIALS INVOLVED IN LOCKHEED BRIBES, AND FEB 12 PRESS DWELT HEAVILY ON SPECULATION THAT NAMES ARE BEING WITHHELD BECAUSE OF USG PRESSURE.

HODGSON

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